

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday, 11 June 2013 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Alan Caine (Chairman)
Councillor Paul-Howitt-Cowan (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Nigel Bowler (Vice-Chairman

Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor Sue Rawlins
Councillor Mick Tinker

In Attendance:
Alex Reeks Assistant Chief Executive
Joanna Riddell Head of Localism
Adrian Selby Team Manager Operational Services
Lyn Marlow Customer Strategy and Services Manager
Rob Lawton Area Team Manager
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present: Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Geoff Wiseman

Also in Attendance: Inspector Simon Outen - West Lindsey
Community Policing Inspector

Apologies: Councillor Lewis Strange
Councillor Jackie Brockway

This being the first meeting of the new civic year, the Chairman welcomed all Members and expressed his thanks to those retiring members for the work they had undertaken on behalf of the Committee the previous year.

7 MINUTES

(a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 12 March

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 12 March be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

- (b) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 20 May 2013.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 20 May 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

8 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.01 13/14)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented Paper A to the Committee noting that all Black items were completed for closing.

The Assistant Chief Executive provided Members with an update in respect of the Amber item relating to electronic parish plans during which it was noted that 12 parishes were currently still receiving hard copies, however the reasons for this were unknown and would be investigated as part of the village hall broadband rollout.

Members were of the view that the provision of hard copies needed to cease as soon as feasibly possible, in light of the associated costs to the Council. It had been their initial understanding that once areas had broadband provision, hard copies would cease, but based on some examples cited by Members, this did not appear to be the case.

Reference was made to the completed Black action, community awards, and a Member indicated that despite previous requests he had still not been provided with the paperwork associated with nominating an Alderman. The Assistant Chief Executive undertook to ensure the required paperwork was provided to Members.

The Chairman made reference to the Extranet which was currently been developed for Members and suggested that Councillor Leaning be nominated as the Member by which all suggestions for improvements and developments be channelled through. Councillor Leaning indicated he was happy to undertake this role. In the ensuing debate Members made reference to the priority query form which had been developed and suggested a number of ways in which this could be improved. Finally, members referred to the difficult and complicated way they were required to log into their west-lindsey accounts, this was something they had been promised would be resolved and simplified but there had been little progress over the past year. The Assistant Chief Executive undertook to further discuss this issue outside of the meeting with a view to resolving it.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule and the verbal update provided at the meeting be received and noted.

10 PRESENTATION BY SIMON OUTEN UPDATE ON ASB AND CRIME FOR POLICING IN WEST LINDSEY

The Committee welcomed Inspector Simon Outen to the meeting and the Chairman invited him to make his presentation, during which the following points were noted: -

Full year results for 2012-2013

Overall Crime – Down 20.1% (899 less offences)

Burglary dwelling – down 17.3%

Burglary other – down 16.7%

Theft of vehicle – down 28.0%

Theft from vehicle – down 6.8%

Criminal damage – down 23.9%

Violence against the person (with injury) – up 3.8% (11 more offences)

Violence against the person (without injury) – down 6.3%

Detection rate (including RJ) – up 2.9% to 24.3%

In the past two years, crime across West Lindsey has reduced by 33%.

It was stressed that these figures had not been subjected to the final audit process, and there may still be some minor adjustments following investigations, but they did give a good indication of local performance and trends.

Over the same period Anti-Social Behaviour has also reduced by similar levels to the overall crime rate. This was slightly harder to compare as some reduction would be down to tighter recording methods, but was broadly in line with the decrease in associated crime types (such as criminal damage).

It was clear that the close working relationship between all the local agencies was contributing to this reduction in both crime and anti-social behaviour, and that this would continue to be the focus in the coming year to maintain pressure on performance, despite the challenging circumstances that all agencies face, both internally and externally.

Members asked a number of questions of Inspector Outen which were responded to accordingly. A Member made reference to specific incidents where residents had found it difficult to contact the Police. In response, Inspector Outen outlined the Communications Plans and the various ways the public were engaged with. As a whole, data suggested residents were happy with the level of service they received, however, Inspector Outen, indicated he

would be happy to talk about individual issues outside of the meeting to ascertain whether there was anything further that could be done.

In response to Members' enquiries, the community trigger process was outlined in detail to the Committee. It was noted that this had initially been a pilot. The Home Office had compiled a report evaluating the benefits achieved and as a result of the successes achieved this would now become legislation. Officers undertook to provide the Committee with a link to the Home Office Report for their information.

The Committee thanked Inspector Outen for the useful and informative presentation.

11 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS IN WEST LINDSEY (CAI.02 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which sought to aid their understanding of the latest position with regard to Neighbourhood Planning in West Lindsey.

Lengthy discussion ensued and Members asked a number of questions specific to their own local communities. These were responded to accordingly. As a whole, Members indicated their frustrations at the process which they considered was being further hampered by the JPU and the absence of housing allocation numbers. Members were concerned that this was a risk to neighbourhood plans being approved and was severely hampering progress in neighbourhood planning.

Reference was made to the tables contained within the document and their inaccuracy. Officers undertook to amend this and re-publish the report on the website.

RESOLVED that the latest position with regard to Neighbourhood Plans in West Lindsey be understood and noted.

12 WINTER GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION REVIEW (CAI.03 13/14)

Consideration was given to a report which sought to provide Members with an update on the implementation of changes to Winter Green Collections as recommended by Committee in July 2012.

Members congratulated Officers and believed the change in shut down times had been a change for the better and urged Officers for this to remain the same going forward.

In response to Members' questions Officers did confirm that free green collections were being reviewed and data being collected in light of what other authorities were doing across the county.

RESOLVED that the update to the cessation of winter green waste and efficiency savings be noted.

13 FEEDBACK 2012/13 (CAI.04 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which reviewed the number, type and results of complaints, comments and compliments made to the Council during 2012/13. The report further outlined to Members the work being undertaken to deliver the Customer Experience Strategy.

In presenting the report the Customer Strategy and Services Manager, warned of the potential for complaints in the planning department to increase in the coming year as a result of recent changes to permitted development rights.

Members enquired as to the specifics of the changes and the Customer Strategy and Services Manager undertook to circulate a document in which the information was set out

Members indicated that where the complaints were more serious in nature, they would welcome the Ward Member being advised, in order that they may assist. In response, Officers outlined to Members the work which was ongoing to better capture data around complaints and it was hoped that this could then be displayed on the Extranet and thus would be readily available to Members.

RESOLVED that the 2012/13 results be noted.

14 COMMUNITY ACTIVITY (CAI.05 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the Localism Team activities and which sought consideration as to how the Service could be further developed.

Members did express concern that there appeared to be some “doubling up” and this could be potentially wasting resources. Some were of the view that there was not enough communication being had with Ward Members, whilst others felt the current approach had seen real benefits in their local areas.

There was real concern that little progress had been seen in the Witham Area and Members felt this was reflected in the report. Reference was made to paragraph 8.4 of the report and it was noted that these activities actually related to the Fosdyke area as opposed to Witham. Officers undertook to amend the report accordingly and republish this.

RESOLVED that a Member/Officer working group be established to consider and review the Localism Programme and assist with the development of future action plans including, current internal funding streams, Member activity and Community involvement, and that the following Members be appointed to serve thereon: -

Councillor Nigel Bowler
Councillor Sue Rawlins
Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor Geoff Wiseman

15 ACCESS TO SERVICES (CAI.06 13/14)

Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with information in respect of access to services and the cost to the Council of different transaction methods, following a request made by the Committee for such information.

There was a lengthy debate in which Members aired their views on how services should be delivered going forward. A Member of the Committee was of the view that service provision was not equal across the District, in light of the Headquarters being based in Gainsborough and was of the belief that services should be operating from rural locations a number of days a week. This view was not shared on the whole and there was an acceptance that face to face transactions were the most costly and likely to reduce going forward rather than increase in light of continued budget restraints.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan be nominated to work closely with the Customer Strategy and Services Manager to review local provision in more detail.

16 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY REPORT - REPORTING PERIOD 3 (CAI.07 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which sought to provide an update on progress on the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities and an update on performance of the service areas.

The intention to formulate a working group, at the next meeting, with the specific remit of monitoring progress and delivery of the corporate plan for 2013/14 was noted and on that basis it was:-

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

17 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.08 13/14)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented a report setting out the items of business due to be considered through the committee system and asked

Members to identify any reports that they wished to be brought before the Challenge and Improvement Committee for scrutiny.

Members again questioned when they could expect to receive the Open for Business report and commented on the significant length of time this matter had been pending. It was noted that this was due for consideration at their next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

18 WORK PLAN (CAI.09 13/14)

The Work Plan for the business of the Challenge and Improvement Committee was discussed.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 pm

Chairman